

Good afternoon, Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Adam Wood and I come before you to express my opposition to the proposed

Budget reductions in the Governor's budget for the Community Colleges. For the last twelve years I have dedicated myself to the serving the people of the United States by serving in the United states Army. I have been all over the world and experienced some truly amazing things. I have seen triumph as well as tragedy during my tours of duty. I have served proudly like so many others in both Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Yet, after years of serving my country and the great people who live here I decided that it was time to get my education. The military had given me the discipline, leadership and experience to become a success in life and all that was missing was the knowledge that only college can provide. I decided to come back to Connecticut for many reasons. One of these reasons was on how much the state of Connecticut values its military service members and its veterans. With the help of the Post 9/11 GI Bill and help from the state I am able to attend college without having to work full time as well. I can focus on my studies and excel on an entirely different level. Many years have passed since I was in school and wanted to get the attention that I knew many of the larger institutions could not offer. I decided to attend NVCC and immediately got involved. I joined the Veterans' Club and worked with other former service members to transition from military life to civilian life. The college has been such an unbelievable supporter of its veteran population. They realize that we are some of the future leaders within our communities, state and country. Most recently, with generous donations from local businesses we were able to provide a beautiful area for Vets to study, relax and learn. I also became involved in Student Government and I am currently the president of our SGA at NVCC. I have worked closely with many of the students, faculty and other colleges to help provide a higher level of service to our students. The people who attend community colleges are the backbone of the industry here in Connecticut. They come from all walks of life and yet their common goal is the same.....to be a success

and give back to their community. The job market in the U.S. and all over the world is even more competitive than ever. People must learn to evolve and continue to learn if we are going to remain a world leader. The community colleges are a key stepping stone for many people in attaining the American dream. If these people do not have the financial support to achieve their dreams then America will never reach its amazing potential. I look before me and I see some truly amazing leaders. Each one of you undoubtedly has a story that may be similar to many of the people who stand before you today. You have the opportunity to ensure that the next generation is equipped to take on any adversity that may face us. You are the leaders of today and we are the leaders of tomorrow.

After graduating from college I look to become a police officer and continue to serve the people of Connecticut. By cutting the budget, this may also lead to programs and classes being cut from our program. The more knowledge that we can obtain the better workers we will be when we enter the job force. Those who graduate from community colleges are far more likely to continue to stay within Connecticut than those who attend private or state institutions. The more people who remain in the state and help generate revenue; the better off we will be in the long run. Raising taxes and taking away funding will only drive people out of state in search of jobs and affordable tuition. This of course will only cause an even greater burden on those who are left behind. I implore the legislature not to approve a reduced budget for the Community Colleges. My future, the people who stand before you today and thousands of others depend on having access to affordable education. Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to speak today and I would enjoy answering any questions you may have.